

ANNUAL REPORT
TO
THE MEMBERS OF
SHORT HEATH
URBAN DISTRICT COUNCIL

BY

JOHN T. HARTILL,

L.R.C.P.L., M.R.C.S., Eng., J.P.,

MEDICAL OFFICER OF HEALTH.

January 23rd, 1904.



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Medical Officer's Annual Report,

— 1903. —

MR. CHAIRMAN AND GENTLEMEN,

In this my 33rd Annual Report, I am unable to speak as favourably as usual of the general health of the District, during four out of the twelve months just concluded.

There is little change to record in the physical features or general character of the district, except that there is still a tendency to increase in the number of Miners, and to decrease in the number of Locksmiths, Iron Workers, and Agricultural Labourers. The Miners appear to have been fairly prosperous throughout the year, and the Locksmiths, I believe, were more than usually prosperous. Food supply was plentiful and good.

The Birth and Death Rates, calculated on an estimated population of 3,624 at Midsummer, were respectively 40·8 and 20·1 per thousand per year, as compared with an average of 42·0 and 15·8 in the ten preceding years. The Death Rate from the seven principal Zymotic Diseases was 6·0 per thousand per year, as compared with an average of 2·3 in the ten preceding years. The deaths of children under a year old per 1000 births registered were 135·1, as compared with an average of 144·8 in the ten preceding years. Four of the deaths were in public institutions outside the district.

The chief features in these statistics are, that the birth rate was decidedly high; that the death rate was considerably over the average, and over what it should be; that the death rate from Zymotic Diseases has only once been exceeded since 1872, and that was 27 years ago;

and that, whilst the infant mortality was low and well below the mean of the ten previous years, the mortality amongst children over one year and under five years old was very high.

Eighteen cases of Infectious Disease were certified, viz. : Small Pox, 1 ; Diphtheria. 3 ; Erysipelas, 6 ; Scarlet Fever, 4 ; Enteric Fever, 2 ; Continued Fever, 1 ; and Puerperal Fever, 1. Of other Contagious or Infectious Diseases there came to my knowledge Measles, 200 ; Whooping Cough, 38 ; Mumps, 10 ; Diarrhœa, 4 ; and Chicken Pox, 4. Of these 14 died from Measles, 2 from Whooping Cough, 2 from Diphtheria, 3 from Diarrhœa, and 1 from Enteric Fever. The case of Small Pox was treated in a Hospital, but all the other cases were treated at home, except one which died from Diarrhœa in the Union House.

As regards Small Pox, my last Annual Report indicated the position of matters at that date. On February 19th, I attended a meeting at Wolverhampton, at which an inquiry was held by an Inspector from the Local Government Board, concerning an application for the issue of a Provisional Order to form several Districts into an United District, under Section 279 of the Public Health Act, 1875 ; and in this application Short Heath joined. The outcome of this meeting was the formation of a South Staffordshire Joint Small Pox Hospital Board, and, on September 25th, I was informed that temporary arrangements had been made for the reception of cases of Small Pox in the event of need, pending the erection of new buildings, at Rowley Regis Isolation Hospital. In the meantime there were cases of Small Pox on two sides of Short Heath, and, on June 2nd, I invited the Council to give me instructions as to isolation in the event of the disease appearing, and I also advised the issue of a circular giving seven reasons why every one in Short Heath should be vaccinated or re-vaccinated. On June 9th, a circular was drawn up and delivered at every house in the District, but it failed to produce the intended effect. A copy of the circular, with a slight misprint in the seventh reason amended, is appended hereto for future reference. On June 26th, having received intimation late in the day of a probable case of

Small Pox at New Invention, I immediately telegraphed for instructions as to possible isolation, and the telegram resulted in arrangements being made next morning with the Willenhall Council ; and on the 27th, with the permission of the Doctor in attendance, I visited the case and secured his immediate removal to the Willenhall Isolation Hospital, before the nature of the ailment had been officially certified. On the same morning I re-vaccinated the man's wife, and later in the day asked the Public Vaccinator to try to secure re-vaccination of as many of his children as might be necessary ; and I also arranged for bed and bed clothing, and as many other things as possible to be disinfected at the Willenhall Disinfecting Station. The case was one of Discrete Small Pox in a man 33 years of age, who had been vaccinated in infancy in one place only, and who had never been re-vaccinated. He was in Hospital 27 days, and before leaving put on a change of clothing brought from without, and the clothing worn in the Hospital, after having been washed, was sent to the Steam Disinfector for disinfection, and thence sent straight to his home. The cost of his isolation was £50, but it was money well spent ; and it is probable the cost would not have been much more if there had been several other cases at the same time ; but, fortunately, the measures taken prevented the spread of the disease. With regard to the Joint Hospital Board, it seems to be expected that the person giving an order for admission to Hospital must satisfy himself that the case is one of Small Pox, and as this will usually be the Medical Officer of Health, his position and responsibility in the matter requires to be more clearly defined. I take it, that if a case has been certified to him as Small Pox, he will be justified in considering himself satisfied that it is Small Pox. At any rate, he has no power to examine a person against his will, nor would he desire to do anything likely to create friction with his Brother Practitioners. From past experience I know how difficult it is to secure isolation, when there is determined opposition on the part of the sufferer or his friends.

With regard to Diphtheria, one of the deaths from that cause was of a case certified in the preceding year, and one of the fresh cases

was contracted whilst in attendance as nurse. The probable cause was indicated in my last Annual Report, and since then a sewer has been put down the street, and all the house drains have been connected with it, and the ditch has been filled up. The street, however, has not been properly kerbed, channelled and metalled. The introduction of the Antitoxin treatment of Diphtheria, has, since 1895, reduced the mortality from this dreadful disease in the Metropolitan Asylums Board's Hospitals, where, on an average, 6,567 were annually treated in the five years ended 1899, by more than one half; and, when occurring as a sequel to Scarlet Fever in the same Hospitals, the Antitoxin treatment has reduced the mortality to 3·8 per cent., as compared with 46·8 per cent. in 1892, and 58·8 per cent. in 1893. The practical aspect of the matter is, that I advise the Council to provide the Anti-Diphtheritic Serum free of cost, through the Medical Gentlemen in attendance, when the sufferers are too poor to provide it for themselves; and I will undertake to work out the details, if the Council will act upon my suggestion.

With regard to Enteric Fever, the origin of one case was most probably associated with defects in drains and nuisances from the keeping of poultry and pigs within 30 feet of the dwelling house, all of which nuisances have since been abated; whilst the other person had recently undergone two operations in a hospital outside the district, and after being in hospital from February to May, was discharged and taken ill with the disease two or three days later. The Sanitary arrangements of the premises in this case were fairly good, and there is practically no doubt the disease was contracted outside the district.

With regard to Puerperal Fever, all necessary instructions were given as to disinfection, and the Nurse in attendance was cautioned as to her responsibility, and no further case was reported.

The chief cause of the increased Death Rate was, however, an unusually severe epidemic of Measles. Ignoring one case which occurred at the early part of the year, from which no other case was contracted, the district was free from Measles until, so far as I know,

September 23rd—but between that date and the end of the year, 199 cases came to my knowledge, 14 of which were fatal, and 13 of which were under five years of age at date of death. This death record from Measles is with one exception (1900) by far the heaviest since 1872, and is considerably heavier than in the year excepted. In considering the incidence of this disease, it must be borne in mind that it is highly contagious before the characteristic rash is developed, that the period of its incubation is from 12 to 14 days, and that the rash does not appear until the fourth day of the ailment. It therefore often happens that a child is at school three or four days before the parents or the Schoolmaster are aware that the child is sickening for Measles, with the result that during those three or four days it is infecting the other children of the school, who, however, do not actually become ill until 12 or 14 days later. The history of the epidemic points to the conclusion, that infected children were present at each of the three Elementary Schools, and that the first cases did not come to the knowledge of your Officers, at any rate, early enough. Between September 23rd and October 8th, 45 of the children at the Lane Head Board Schools were attacked, and, on October 9th, the Council ordered the Schools to be closed for six weeks. On November 19th, the Infant Department of the Wesleyan Schools, and on December 16th, the Infant Department of Holy Trinity Schools, were also closed for six weeks for the same reason. Instructions, calculated to restrict infection, were printed and circulated, but I fear the majority of the Short Heath people do not read, and therefore do not heed, much that is printed. All the Schools were disinfected and cleansed, and advice to exclude all children for definite periods from School was given, who, being themselves well, came from infected homes. The year, as a whole, was wet and sunless, and it accords with my past experience, that in such years the general vitality of children's life is lowered, and that, if in such seasons, especially at the cold part of the year, the infection of Measles is present, its infectivity is greater and more dangerous than in warm, dry weather. Bad though the record is, I still think School Closure was of some service to health ; and

that whether it was or not, it is so in some cases ; and that whether regarded from the stand-point of health, of moral responsibility, or of the resulting disorganization of work which such an epidemic produces, it is the proper thing to advise. Unfortunately, the epidemic is not yet over.

The cases of Whooping Cough, although numerous in April and May, do not call for special comment.

The Inspector of Nuisance's summary of his house to house inspection, shows 752 occupied and 3 void houses, with 1,751 bedrooms, 464 sanitary conveniences, and 343 ashpits, of which 206 are covered and 137 not covered. The proportion of covered to uncovered ashpits again shows an increase—a step in the right direction. I again repeat that every ashpit ought to be made water-tight, above and below, as quickly as possible ; and every ashpit containing water is a nuisance, which the Council has power to abate. The system of excrement removal is by contract, and the Sanitary conveniences are chiefly privy cess-pits. The Contractor does his work well, the conveniences are in fair order, and the 89 pigsties, the stables and cowsheds are kept fairly clean. There are no offensive trades. The bake-houses, slaughter-houses, dairies, cowsheds and milk shops were regularly inspected, and maintained in a proper state of cleanliness. Reference to Table 5, appended hereto, will show that most of the Notices in Arrear at the end of 1902 were complied with in 1903, and that most of those issued in 1903 were also complied with. The position of matters, however, with regard to Brewer's Row, New Invention, was clearly defined by me, after an inspection made on December 30th. This matter has been before the Council for three years, in each of my Annual Reports, and though much has been done in the way of improvement, much is needed in the matter of drainage and water supply. As the polluted source of water has disappeared, the Council can draw its own inference as to where the tenants get their present supply from ; and they have only to show a little firmness, and this property, which at the best is only a poor one, will be in better sanitary order than it has been for 20 years.

In my last Annual Report, I suggested that 30 to 50 new houses in the District would be immediately occupied. Only 8 have been built—hence 6 Formal and 14 Informal Notices to abate overcrowding have been necessary. There is plenty of open land for building houses on suitable for the working classes, and all that is wanted is, that capitalists should be willing to build the right kind of houses.

With regard to Sewage Disposal, I understand plans have been prepared for the sewerage of the entire District, and that the proposed system has been approved by the County Medical Officer of Health. I formed one of a deputation to Stafford on the subject, and it was then elicited, that subject to the presentation of plans and their approval, it was probable that the County Council, who have been pressing the matter forward for some years, would be satisfied if the work were done in sections, having regard to the weak financial condition of the District. The Council, I am told, are now considering the best means for carrying out the scheme which has been approved.

As regards Factories and Workshops, as all were visited in 1902, my attention in 1903 was only specially directed to a few, chiefly those where some special reason for a visit was indicated or suspected, though a general supervision of the whole of them was given. Thirty visits were paid by me, or the Inspector of Nuisances, to 17 workshops and 2 factories, securing the abolition of nuisances from 4 pigsties and several wash-tubs in proximity ; provision in one instance of a covered for an open drain ; the erection of one new sanitary convenience to a workshop ; and of two additional sanitary conveniences to factories where males and females are employed ; the removal of one untrapped drain from the interior of a bake-house ; the removal of pigeons and fowl from two workshops ; the removal of one dangerous structural defect ; the lime-washing of one workshop, and the notice to get three others lime-washed ; improvement in a dirty ditch near ; and, in addition, notice was given that ventilation, damaged by defective position of a blacksmith's hearth, must be improved at an early date. Most of these remedies were effected without the need for Formal Notices. There are 59 workshops and 6 factories, no tenement, no

domestic workshops, and no laundry. The chief workshop industries are the manufacture of locks and keys. Most, if not all the workshops, have been lime-washed for many years, once or oftener in 14 months. General instructions as to fixing notices of the number of persons who may be employed in each room were given in 1902, and where there was any doubt the instructions were emphasized. I don't think such notices have been fixed in the majority of shops ; but there is probably no shop in the district overcrowded. There are no *wet* trades, and no wet floors. Ventilation, in general terms, is ample. The bake-houses are in good order, and there is no underground bake-house. I have received no list of out-workers, either direct or through the Council, and believe there is, at the present time, no out-work done, except in registered workshops. His Majesty's Inspectors made no representation to the Council, or to me, as to sanitary defects in workshops, and no infringements were reported to His Majesty's Inspectors by the Council. Workshops built in recent years are light and airy, and a great improvement on the older shops.

The Water Supply was good and plentiful, even at the higher parts of the district. It is supplied by the Wolverhampton Corporation, chiefly from an artesian well, but supplemented by river water.

There were 148 births registered, and 20 deaths of children under a year old. One hundred and twenty children were successfully vaccinated, and one child was exempted from vaccination by Magisterial certificate. No certificate of insusceptibility was received. These figures denote progress in the desire for vaccination, compared with those of recent years, but there is still much need for looking up arrears of vaccination.

As regards the Roads, the people of Short Heath consider they have a genuine grievance, that most of them have not been made "main roads," and I think rightly so. They say that the County gets a large revenue through the County Rate from the Essington Collieries, where there is no consumption of coal. A large part of the output of these Collieries, as soon as it leaves them, is carted over Short Heath and Wednesfield roads, and the roads, in consequence, are greatly cut

up. Very little of the coal, so carted, is consumed in the factories of either district, and the people hold that the roads should be repaired at the cost of the County. The roads are therefore always faulty, and need an expenditure upon them which handicaps the Council in effecting other improvements. The District is small and poor, and the cost of road repairing, for traffic from which Short Heath itself derives no substantial benefit, absorbs the money which is needed for kerbing, channelling, sewers, sewage disposal, public lighting, and other purposes directly, or indirectly, bearing upon the health and social conveniences of the District. Possibly, further representations on the subject might lead to the desired result.

At the request of the Council, I attended a meeting at Stafford, convened by the County Council, to consider the desirability, or otherwise, of a County Sanatorium for the open-air treatment of Tubercular Diseases. The principle of the need for such an Institution was supported by a large majority of those present; and a most generous offer of a site of 3½ acres of land, free of cost, was made by a private gentleman. Although I felt that the establishment of a Sanatorium could only touch the fringe of the question, as there are so many sufferers in this large County, the proposal had my hearty support; mainly because I believe its influence will be great as an educational centre, not only in prolonging the lives of the sufferers themselves, but in teaching them that Consumption is a parasitic disease, and how to destroy that parasite, or deal with it in such a manner that others may not *catch* Consumption from them.

All deaths in the district were certified by Doctor or Coroner.

The Tables required by the Local Government Board and County Council are in substance appended.

I am, Gentlemen,

Yours obediently,

JOHN T. HARTILL,

M. O. H.

Willenhall.

January 23rd, 1904.

SMALL POX AND VACCINATION.

Seven Reasons why everyone in Short Heath should be Vaccinated or Re-vaccinated :—

1.—Because, in the judgment of the Medical Officer of Health, the most potent safeguard against Small Pox is efficient Vaccination of young children, and Re-vaccination of older persons.

2.—Because, in the great epidemic of Small Pox in Willenhall in 1894, the death rate among the un-vaccinated was nearly $33\frac{3}{4}$ per cent. of all attacked, whilst that among the vaccinated was only a little over $2\frac{1}{4}$ per cent.—that is to say—it was *more than $14\frac{1}{2}$ times greater among the former than the latter.*

3.—Because, in the same epidemic, the death-rate was only one per cent. of all attacked, who had four primary vaccination scars.

4.—Because there was not a single death in the same epidemic among those who had been re-vaccinated, or recently vaccinated, although they numbered several thousands.

5 —Because, in the same epidemic, there were 14 Nurses and Attendants at the Small Pox Hospital, of whom 13 were re-vaccinated before commencing duties, and all escaped Small Pox, whilst the other one who had been unsuccessfully re-vaccinated, contracted Small Pox.

6.—Because, in the smaller epidemic of Small Pox in Short Heath in 1894, the death-rate among the un-vaccinated was more than four times greater than among the vaccinated.

7.—Because, in one London Small Pox Hospital last year, there were 697 people employed on the premises, who, with a single doubtful exception, had been recently successfully vaccinated, and that one was the only one of the number who contracted Small Pox.

The Public Vaccinator for Short Heath is Mr. WILLIAM BOTT, Bloxwich Road; and other Medical Gentlemen Vaccinate by private arrangement with their patients.

The prompt assistance of the public may save a serious epidemic ; and, therefore, much suffering and heavy cost. It will be too late to render much help, except financially, if once Small Pox gets a firm footing.

By Order of the Council,

GEORGE CROSS DAMS,

Clerk.

Table 1.

FOR WHOLE DISTRICT.

Year.	Population estimated to middle of each year.	Births.		Total Deaths Registered in the District.				Net Deaths at all Ages belonging to the District.				
		Number	Rate ^a	Under 1 Year of Age		At all Ages:						
				Number.	Rate per 1000 Births registered	Number.	Rate. ^a					
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
1893	2600	109	41.9	16	146.7	47	18.0					
1894	2667	119	44.6	17	142.8	43	16.1					
1895	2748	130	47.3	8	61.5	32	11.6			5	37	13.4
1896	3373	136	40.3	14	102.9	46	13.6			0	46	13.6
1897	3472	153	44.0	33	215.6	79	22.7					
1898	3531	156	44.1	29	185.8	54	15.2			0	54	15.2
1899	3531	135	38.2	28	207.4	55	15.5			0	55	15.5
1900	3531	130	36.8	15	115.3	72	20.3			0	72	20.3
1901	3531	135	38.2	19	140.7	47	13.3			1	48	13.5
1902	3585	162	45.1	21	129.6	44	12.2			2	46	12.8
Averages for years 1893-1902	3257	136	42.0	20	144.8	52	15.8	0	0			
1903	3624	148	40.8	20	135.1	69	19.0	0	0	4	73	20.1

* Rates in Columns 4, 8, and 13 calculated per 1000 of estimated population.

Area of District in acres (exclusive of area covered by water.) } 550 in 1893.
 } 1063 since 1896.

Total population at all ages } 3531
 Number of inhabited houses } 722
 Average number of persons per house } 4.8 } At Census of 1901.

NOTE.—(Columns 9, 10, and 11.—There are no Public Institutions *in the District*. Previous to 1895 Short Heath and Willenhall together formed the Township of Willenhall and were governed by two Local Boards. Deaths in the Union House at Wolverhampton of persons from Short Heath were not obtainable separately, but the average would be from one to two each year. I have no information of any deaths except those *in the District* and those as given *in the Union House*, prior to 1901.

The Township of Short Heath now embraces the old Local Board District of Short Heath, plus part of Wednesfield old Local Board District.

By the term "Non-residents" is meant persons brought into the District on account of sickness or infirmity; and dying in public institutions there; and by the term "Residents" is meant persons who have been taken out of the District on account of sickness or infirmity, and have died in public institutions elsewhere.

Table 2.
LOCALITIES.

Not filled up, as there were no recognised divisions of known population.

Table 3.

Cases of Infectious Disease certified during the Year.

	At all Ages	At Ages — Years.					
		Under 1	1 to 5	5 to 15	15 to 25	25 to 65	65 and upw'ds
Small Pox	1					1	
Diphtheria	3		1	1		1	
Erysipelas	6		1			5	
Scarlet Fever	4		2	2			
Enteric Fever	2			1		1	
Continued Fever	1					1	
Puerperal Fever	1				1		
Totals	18	0	4	4	1	9	0

NOTE.—One case was treated in Hospital, and temporary arrangements have been made for the reception of Small Pox cases, in the future, at Rowley Regis Isolation Hospital.

Other cases of Infectious Disease which came to my knowledge.

	At all Ages	At Ages—Years.					
		Under 1	1 to 5	5 to 15	15 to 25	25 to 65	65 and upw'ds
Chicken Pox	4	1	2	1			
Diarrhœa	4	2			1	1	
Measles	200	9	106	85			
Mumps	10		1	9			
Whooping Cough	38	3	17	18			
Totals	256	15	126	113	1	1	0

Table 4.

CAUSES OF, AND AGES AT, DEATH.

Causes of Death.	Deaths in or belonging to whole District at subjoined Ages.							Total Deaths in Public Institutions in the District
	All Ages	Under 1 year	1 and under 5	5 and under 15	15 and under 25	25 and under 65	65 and upwards.	
Small-pox								
Measles	14	3	10	1				
Scarlet Fever								
Whooping-cough	2	1	1					
Diphtheria and membranous croup	2		1	1				
Croup								
Fever { Typhus								
Enteric	1					1		
Other continued								
Epidemic Influenza								
Cholera								
Plague								
Diarrhœa	3	3						
Enteritis	2			2				
Puerperal Fever... ..								
Erysipelas								
Other Septic Diseases								
Phthisis	6					6		
Other Tubercular Diseases	2		2					
Cancer, malignant disease	3					2	1	
Bronchitis	6	3	1				2	
Pneumonia	3					2	1	
Pleurisy	1				1			
Other Diseases of Respiratory Organs	1						1	
Alcoholism								
Cirrhosis of Liver								
Venereal Diseases								
Premature Birth	2	2						
Diseases and Accidents of Parturition	2					2		
Heart Diseases	2		1		1			
Accidents... ..	1			1				
Suicides								
All other causes	20	10	1	2		1	6	
All causes	73	22	17	7	2	14	11	0

Table 5.

SUMMARY OF WORK BY INSPECTOR OF NUISANCES.

Houses inspected...	...	...	...	...	...	...	756
Schools	„	...	...	...	...	...	3
Workshops and Factories inspected	...	...	...	...	...	...	19
Dairies inspected, quarterly	...	...	...	...	...	...	3
Cowsheds	„	„	...	...	...	...	2
Slaughter-houses inspected quarterly	...	...	...	...	...	...	3
Ashpits and Privies inspected	...	...	...	...	...	...	807
Pigsties inspected	...	...	...	...	...	...	85
Informal Notices to remedy Foul Condition of Dwelling Houses							6
Abatements after Notice	...	...	...	...	...	...	6
Formal Notices to remedy structural defects in Dwelling Houses							5
Abatements after Notice...	...	...	...	...	...	...	5
Informal Notices to remedy structural defects in Dwelling							
Houses and their appurtenances	...	...	...	...	...	...	47
Abatements after Notice	...	...	...	...	...	...	47
Formal Notices to abate overcrowding	...	...	...	...	...	...	6
Abatements after Notice...	...	...	...	...	...	...	6
Informal Notices to abate overcrowding	...	...	...	...	...	...	14
Abatements after Notice	...	...	...	...	...	...	13
Informal Notices concerning Houses unfit for Habitation	...	...	...	...	...	...	3
House demolished after Notice...	...	...	...	...	...	...	1
Houses rendered fit for habitation after Notice,	...	...	...	...	...	...	2
Formal Notices to abate nuisances from Ashpits and Privies	...	...	...	...	...	...	6
Abatements after Notice...	...	...	...	...	...	...	6

(Continued on next page)

TABLE 5 (continued).

Informal Notices to abate nuisances from Ashpits and Privies	38
Abatements after Notice... ..	37
Formal Notices to remedy faults in House Drainage ...	22
Abatements after Notice... ..	22
Informal Notices to remedy faults in House Drainage ...	48
Abatements after Notice... ..	48
Informal Notices to abate nuisances from Pigsties ...	9
Abatements after Notice... ..	8
Formal Notice to remedy structural defect in workshop ...	1
Remedy after Notice	1
Informal Notice to remove pigeons and fowl from workshop...	2
Removal after Notice	2
Informal Notices to limewash and cleanse workshops ...	4
Notice complied with	1
Formal Notice to provide sanitary convenience to workshop ...	1
Provided after Notice	1
Formal Notice to remedy defective drainage in bake-house ...	1
Abatement after Notice	1
Informal Notices to abate other nuisances in or near workshops	8
Abatements after Notice... ..	7
Formal Notices to abate other nuisances ...	2
Abatements after Notice... ..	2
Informal Notices to abate other nuisances ...	19
Abatements after Notice	19
Formal Notices in 1900, 1901, and 1902, concerning defective	
Water Supply, not complied with... ..	8
Formal Notices in 1902 complied with in 1903 ...	5
Informal Notices in 1902 complied with in 1903 ...	14
Houses disinfected after Infectious Disease ...	10
Schools ,, ,, ,, ...	3
Lots of Infected Bedding and Clothing disinfected—about ...	20

